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ABSTRACT

This bulletin presents strategies that school-to-work practitioners can use to implement comprehensive and effective career development programs. These strategies are described: career development as an integral and interdependent program; team counseling; new roles for career and guidance counselors; sequence of comprehensive activities; connections to labor market information; career and computer laboratories; and individual education and career planning. The next section describes three effective practices: a comprehensive career development program operated by Sabino High School, Tucson, Arizona; "Education Cones," which connect academics and work beginning in the early grades in the Weber County School District, Utah; and a systematic guidance program that enables students to develop Employability Development Plans in the Van Buren Vocational-Technical Center in Lawrence, Michigan. Contacts and addresses for these programs are provided. The bulletin concludes with a listing of 15 organizations that can provide further information on the topic. Brief summaries describe the organizations' focus and activities. (YLB)

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★RESOURCE★ BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 1996

# Career Development in School-to-Work

School-to-work systems are designed to ease the transition of young people from school to adult life. As a result, it is critical that these systems implement comprehensive career development programs that provide individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to develop realistic career plans and to make appropriate career decisions.

Career development programs can go beyond simple academic and/or vocational guidance, and help integrate academic subject matter and learning techniques into an individual's career development and education plan. As a result, effective career development programs can help youth make both educational *and* career choices as they progress through a school-to-work system. This, in turn, makes a more direct connection between school, career preparation, and work. The importance of career development has grown as the education system has recognized its dual role of preparing students for the world of work as well as for postsecondary education and training. Effective career development programs can ease the transition in each of these areas by helping young people not only obtain skills in key areas, but also translate this training into substantive educational, occupational, and economic opportunities.

This bulletin presents strategies that school-to-work practitioners can employ to implement comprehensive and effective career development programs. The bulletin also lists organizations and other resources that provide additional information on career development programs and strategies.

## Strategies

**Career Development as an Integral and Interdependent Program**. Career development programs should be viewed as an integral part of school-to-work, not a set-aside program that responds only to specific requests for assistance. To do this, career development should be established as an individual *program* within a school-to-work system. This requires that programming be developmental and comprehensive, taking on a broad range of activities that focus on all aspects of career development. In addition, all students should be required to actively and regularly participate in all aspects of career counseling. Comprehensive career development programs have activities and processes to help individuals acquire competencies, in addition to having professionally trained personnel, materials, and resources to ensure that career development programs have a measure of autonomy and a unique identity within a school-to-work system. At the same time, however, these programs should be closely linked and integrated with other programs and services in the school.

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**Team Counseling**. Traditionally, career development programs have been the responsibility of an individual guidance counselor or a guidance department in a school or school system. Comprehensive career development programs, however, should work to actively involve all school-to-work partners in their design and implementation. These partners include guidance counselors, school administrators, teachers, representatives of business and community organizations, family members, and the students themselves.

Each of these partners has an important role in career development. Counselors are the core of the program and should be the team leaders. The involvement of school administrators and teachers helps ensure that counseling programs are integrated with broader school reform efforts. Involving employers, organized labor partners, and representatives of community organizations helps counselors and counseling teams develop educational and career plans and curricula that are relevant to the economic and workforce demands that young people will face after school. Outreach to parents and other family members is critical to obtaining external support, as it emphasizes that career development is a critical component of school-to-work. Finally, the involvement of students assists counselors and educators in developing academic curricula and career development programs that are relevant not only to economic and workforce demands, but also to an individual's interests and competencies.

**New Roles for Career and Guidance Counselors**. Within this framework of career development, counselors take on a variety of new roles and challenges in program design and implementation. One change will be a shift toward emphasizing both the academic *and* occupational options and choices of *all* students, as opposed to a narrow focus on helping college-bound youth examine postsecondary education options. This will require investment in in-service training programs for counselors and other school-to-work partners to acquaint them with career development programming and techniques. Also needed is a change in reward structures, from one that rewards only counselors who emphasize the importance of going to college to one that rewards counselors for the successful transition of all students.

The key role of counselors in school-to-work is to act as a facilitator of systemic change. In addition to assisting youth with their career choices and decision-making, counselors can facilitate the collaboration of stakeholders. Counselors working as the lead in a guidance team with administrators, teachers, family members, students, and business, labor, and community representatives, can ensure that the needs and contributions of each partner are considered in the career development program.

**Sequence of Comprehensive Activities**. Effective career development programs work best when they follow a sequence of coordinated and comprehensive activities beginning in the early grades. This type of programming allows for young people to obtain continuous exposure to career options, understand the skill levels and education required for these occupations, and determine their prospects in a variety of career paths. Starting early allows for a developmental approach to career development, so career awareness, career exploration, and career planning and decision-making can occur during the progression from elementary school through postsecondary education.

Career awareness activities can begin as early as kindergarten and continue through elementary school, and can involve guest classroom lectures or field trips to work sites to expose young people to a variety of career and occupational options. In upper elementary and junior high school, career development programs can turn more toward career exploration activities, in which students examine


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specific careers more closely. In this stage, students can participate in job shadowing or mentoring experiences with workers or work on classroom projects that apply academic concepts to the careers they are examining. In high school, students can participate in activities that expose them to careers, including work-based learning experiences that focus on a specific job or occupation. Through these experiences, young people not only learn about a variety of careers and occupations, but they can also begin to identify what skills are required to succeed in these areas, and can start making informed career decisions.

**Connections to Labor Market Information**. Career development programs can be successful only if up-to-date career and occupational labor market information is provided regularly. Labor market information includes information on the jobs and occupations available both within and outside of a student's community, any advantages and disadvantages of specific jobs and careers, and the growth potential of specific occupations. It is in this area that the participation of businesses, organized labor, and community organizations is especially important, as they are the partners who are best equipped to help provide accurate and up-to-date labor market information.

Employers and representatives from organized labor can work directly with administrators and classroom teachers to ensure that academic coursework and curricula are providing young people with the information required to make informed career decisions, and can assist counselors in building career development programs within a school-to-work system. Comprehensive labor market information should also cover a wide range of occupational areas in the local, state, and national labor market. This can help young people recognize that there are many jobs and career opportunities for them outside of their local economy, and can provide students a chance to explore this wider range of options.

**Career and Computer Laboratories**. Career development programs can greatly benefit from a centralized career center and the use of career software and technology. Career centers emphasize the importance of career development and allow for career and guidance counselors to better coordinate counseling and training programs and services. For example, career centers can be used to perform student career and skill assessments, operate in-service training activities, conduct career counseling and planning sessions, house labor market and postsecondary education information, and host job and career fairs.

Computerized career information systems help individuals explore career options and opportunities and relate personal characteristics (such as interests, aptitudes, and goals) to job and career possibilities. These systems contain a wealth of information on occupations and related education and training programs, such as: employment outlook, earning levels, working conditions, educational requirements, admissions policies, financial aid, etc. These systems are widely used at public schools, job service offices, military bases, libraries, colleges, state employment agencies, and many other sites. Access to computerized information systems provides students with a comprehensive yet simplified method of obtaining information about any and all careers which are appropriate to their personal goals.

**Individual Education and Career Planning**. Career development programs should also work to help young people develop individualized education and career plans. These plans can serve as the centerpiece of a career development program by setting educational and career goals for youth and outlining the academic and occupational experiences required to meet these goals. In addition, these



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plans are most effective when they address both the strengths and weaknesses of youth, and when they are evaluated and updated on a regular basis. This allows young people to develop strategies to overcome the obstacles they face in school and the workplace as well as build on their existing strengths and interests. Career portfolios, which include documentation of individual interests, skills, personal goals, classes, work experiences, extra-curricular activities, significant accomplishments, etc., are an important organizational tool that can be used as a "roadmap" documenting the young person's career development.

## Effective Practices

**Sabino High School** in Tucson, Arizona, operates a comprehensive career development program. In place since 1978, the program has become an integral part of the Sabino school improvement plan. The program is supported by community agencies; parent volunteers; business, industry, and labor organizations; and government agencies.

At Sabino, counselors guide students in the three program areas of career, educational, and personal social development, and have taken on the roles of manager, coordinator, and facilitator to involve their partners in the career development process. Counselors work together with career center coordinators, academic and vocational teachers, and parent volunteers to present the career domain competencies--self-knowledge, educational/occupational exploration, and career planning--to all students. Counselors have also helped vocational teachers integrate career planning into their program and make it part of the vocational curriculum.

Counselors work directly with students in the classroom between four and six times a year to deliver classroom guidance lessons through a variety of methods. Career lessons include interest inventories, values inventories, and developing individual student four-year plans for high school and postsecondary direction. During this time, each student develops a Career Planner which they work on yearly to refine their goals and plans. Through these experiences, all students create an individual career plan which outlines and guides their educational and career planning activities.

Sabino also houses a Career Center which students may visit at any time. The Center is staffed by 10 to 12 parents who volunteer to work with students. In the fall, all seniors have an individual conference with a parent volunteer where graduation plans are discussed and students receive counseling on their career options. In the spring, volunteers hold similar conferences with all juniors. In addition, the Center houses four computers which have a variety of career software programs for student use. There is also an Internet connection which allows students to use these programs and obtain additional career information. Through the Center, counselors are better equipped to coordinate guidance services, and students are able to participate in career exposure, exploration, and awareness activities.

**The Weber County School District** in Utah promotes the development of career education around the concept of "Education Cones," which connect academics and work beginning in the early grades. The cone strategy was developed through input and feedback from school administrators, guidance counselors, businesses, community organizations, and parents. Representatives from each of these groups were brought together to form an Advisory Committee for the "Fremont Cone," which consists of Fremont High School, two junior high schools, and seven elementary schools. Student input has also been actively encouraged and solicited by the Advisory Committee.

The Cone System starts in the elementary schools, which offer career awareness activities such as field trips and career fairs to help introduce students to the world of work. One school, Pioneer Elementary School, has an agreement with a local grocery store in which all students in grades one through five visit the store, with each grade focusing on a different component of the store. For example, second graders working on weights and measurements in the classroom spend time in the Produce Department to see how their classroom learning applies to the work in this section of the store.

In the two junior high schools, the focus begins to shift toward career exploration. In this stage, students work with guidance counselors and teachers to focus on career options, participate in job shadowing and mentoring experiences, and prepare a career research paper in the English class using specialized career information computer software. In addition, all students attend an Applied Technology Day at Fremont High School which introduces them to new careers and orients them to the high school before they attend as students.

At Fremont High School, the emphasis shifts once again, this time toward substantive career and work-based learning experiences such as internships and apprenticeships, and integrates these experiences with school-based learning activities. This is designed to expand a young person's knowledge beyond career awareness and exploration and into substantive occupational and career training. These activities, however, remain broad enough to ensure that career awareness and exploration activities continue, and do not track young people into a specific occupation or career path before they are ready.

The **Van Buren Vocational-Technical Center** in Lawrence, Michigan, offers a systemic guidance program based on the premise that students can make tentative career decisions and plans when they have effective guidance programs in place to assist in their career development. The Van Buren Vo-Tech Center ensures four provisions for all learners interested in pursuing a career: 1) involvement in applying academic skills with occupational skills; 2) expanded opportunities to develop employability skills; 3) linkage with business/industry and community colleges to make the transition from high school to work or further education; and 4) career guidance and skills necessary to plan for the future.

The career development process involves self-awareness, option awareness, decision-making, planning, and placement. These objectives are recycled throughout the educational process in order to help all students regardless of their current stage of career maturity. Prefolio workbooks are used with eighth- or ninth-grade students to help them identify their top career interests and abilities. Students explore their career and educational information through a variety of structured activities such as computer information, job simulations, career internships, job shadowing, and work experience. Students then learn a systemic decision-making model.

Students develop Employability Development Plans based on their career and postsecondary educational decisions. The plans are reviewed regularly and are used as starting points for the student-managed portfolios which document students' progress toward the goals they have outlined in their career plan. The portfolios are used by graduating students to secure employment and/or admission to postsecondary education and training institutions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TOPIC, CONSULT THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

## Effective Practices

**Sabino High School:** Susan Reno, Department Chairperson, Sabino High School, 5000 North Bowes Road, Tuscon, AZ 85749 ★ 520-512-3237 ★ http://azstarnet.com/~sabino/index.html.

**Van Buren Vocational-Technical Center:** Donald Olendorf, Administrator for Special Programs, Van Buren Intermediate School District Vocational-Technical Center, 250 South Street, Lawrence, MI 49064 ★ 616-674-8001.

**Weber County School District, Utah:** Sherilyn Gerber, Student Services Coordinator, Weber County School District, 5320 South Adams Avenue, Ogden, UT 84405 ★ 801-476-7800.

## Organizations

**American Educational Associates** has developed a "Career Crossroads" system to help all students develop career plans and portfolios to ease the transition from school to work. Career Crossroads is a student-driven workbook and software system, cross-referenced to National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee national career development guidelines and Center for Occupational Research and Development clusters. It is designed as a career development system for school-to-work participants in grades seven to twelve. 8137 North Allan Road, Fenwick, MI 48834 ★ 800-532-7579.

**The American School Counselors Association** (ASCA) works to ensure excellence in school counseling by providing professional development, enhancing school counseling programs, and researching effective school counseling programs. ASCA provides publications, educational programs and conferences, professional development workshops, and other programs for school counselors in public and private pre-kindergarten, elementary, middle/junior high, secondary, and postsecondary schools. ASCA also assists counselors in delivering more effective services by providing the means and information to enhance skills, to provide support for self-evaluation, and to disseminate research findings on ways to measure counselor effectiveness. 801 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 ★ 703-683-2722.

**The American Vocational Association** has a Guidance Division whose purpose includes the following: 1) to provide leadership and direction for guidance, counseling, and placement personnel; 2) to expand and improve guidance, counseling, and placement programs that facilitate the career development of all individuals; and 3) to enhance the professional competence and status of guidance, counseling, and placement personnel. 1410 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 ★ 703-683-3111 or 800-826-9972.

**The Career Development Training Institute** (CDTI) is a national program established in 1992 through the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (see also listing on NOICC, below) by an appropriation of Congress. The CDTI designs career development training programs for states to train personnel who help students and adults acquire career planning skills and make career decisions. The program consists of two sets of activities: one is carried out at the national level through the CDTI, and the other is carried out through the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees. The CDTI is a consortium of seven instititions, each of which is currently involved in implementing school-to-work transition projects such as "training of trainers," career development training sessions, and career development manuals. NOICC, 2100 M Street, NW, Suite 156, Washington, DC 20037 ★ 202-653-5665 (contact: Burt Carlson).

**Careerware** develops comprehensive career development software and related products that offer high quality solutions to the career counseling needs of youth, teenagers, and adults. Software programs cover self-awareness and assessment, career exploration, career decision-making activities, and labor market information. ISM Information Systems Management, Inc., 175 B State Street, P.O. Box 129, Clayton, NY 13624 ★ 800-267-1544.

**The Center for Community Career Education** is a non-profit career and educational training center established in 1980 on the campus of The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In addition to providing technical assistance in school-to-work and welfare-to-work, the Center has direct experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating career development models for youth, displaced homemakers, individuals with disabilities, Aid to Families with Dependent Children recipients, delinquent youth, dislocated workers, pregnant teens, and career changers. The Center's mission has been dedicated to providing quality career, educational, and organizational development services which advance a community's capacity to improve the economic independence and employment of its citizens. The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 615 McCallie Avenue, Chattanooga, TN 37403 ★ 423-755-4475 ★ scole@cecasun.utc.edu.

**The Center on Education and Work** (CEW) is a research, development, and technical assistance unit of the University of Wisconsin School of Education, dedicated to improving linkages between education and work. In addition to policy research, evaluation, and development, CEW operates six development and technical assistance teams aligned with various components of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. CEW also works with state and local practitioners, as well as counselors, secondary and postsecondary teachers, and school administrators, to design curricula and develop customized workshops and in-service training programs. 964 Educational Sciences, 1025 West Johnson, Madison, WI 53706 ★ 608-263-3696 ★ http://www.cew.wisc.edu.

**The Education Resources Institute** (TERI) works to provide people from diverse backgrounds with information and advice about careers, postsecondary education and training, and financial aid so that they will be able to make informed decisions about future options and prepare for their chosen careers. TERI has developed model career and postsecondary awareness programs for students as early as sixth grade, and has assisted schools and school systems in assessing their career counseling and development programs. TERI has also operated in-service training for counselors, teachers, and administrators. 330 Stuart Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02116-5267 ★ 617-426-0281.

**The National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc.** (NBCC) is a nonprofit organization that establishes and monitors a national counselor certification process. NBCC offers specialty certification in several areas, including career counseling and school counseling. In meeting this mission, NBCC promotes quality assurance in counseling practices, the value of counseling, public awareness of quality counseling practices, professionalism in counseling, and leadership in credentialing. 3 Terrace Way, Suite D, Greensboro, NC 27403-3660 ★ 910-547-0607 ★ nbcc@nbcc.org.

**The National Career Development Association** provides its members with a variety of professional publications, products, and services, as well as opportunities for professional growth, interaction, and service. American Counseling Association, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 ★ 703-823-9800.

**The National Center for Research in Vocational Education's Office of Student Services** (OSS) works to promote quality programs and services that assist students, at both the secondary and postsecondary level, to successfully transition from school to work. OSS is currently working to assist the nation's schools in coordinating a comprehensive student services model and increasing awareness and

understanding of the transition from school to work, with an emphasis on career guidance and counseling programs. 345 Education Building, 1310 South Sixth Street, Champaign, IL 61820 n 217-333-0807.

**The National Consortium of State Career Guidance Supervisors** is a national coalition to enhance career guidance and counseling, leadership, research, and dissemination in education. The consortium's activities address the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational programs, counselor education, and administration of career guidance programs. Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090 ★ 614-292-4353 or 800-848-4815.

**The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee** (NOICC) is a federal interagency committee that was established by Congress in 1976. It functions as a coordinating committee with members representing 10 agencies in the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Commerce, Defense, and Agriculture. NOICC works at the state level through State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees (SOICCs). Together, NOICC and the SOICCs form a nationwide Network that focuses on promoting the use of occupational and career information and career development programs. 2100 M Street, NW, Suite 156, Washington, DC 20037 ★ 202-653-7680.

**School & Main** works to improve the capacity of schools and their broader communities to prepare youth for lifelong success. To meet this mission, School & Main has worked directly with both urban and rural school-to-work partnerships to improve the postsecondary and economic success of young people. In addition, School & Main has worked extensively to identify youth career development strategies at the middle school, high school, and postsecondary level. The Health Institute, New England Medical Center, 750 Washington Street, NEMC 328, Boston, MA 02111 ★ 617-636-9151.

**The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Division of Vocational Technical Education** administers the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (Perkins Act) for vocational-technical programs offered in secondary and postsecondary schools, and provides services to the States and the field in response to the mandates of the Act. One of the primary functions is program leadership in the areas of Career Guidance and Counseling, Tech Prep, Special Populations, Vocational and Academic Integration, Professional Development, and Program Accountability. U.S. Department of Education, OVAE/DVTE, 330 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20202 ★ 202-205-9037 http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/.

For additional information, please contact:
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